



**From Awareness to Action: Making Every School  
a Health Promoting School**

UNICEF's Contribution to Health-Promoting  
Schools and Integrated Child Wellbeing Systems

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# Presentation overview

- Health and wellbeing in schools: UNICEF approach
- MHPSS as a key priority
- Collaboration with WHO
- Lessons learned

# Gateways to Improving Child and Adolescent Health & Wellbeing

Health-promoting  
schools and  
preschools

Primary health care  
fit for children and  
adolescents

Conducive policies  
and environments

Engagement of  
children and  
adolescents

*\* A Healthy Start to a Healthy Life: a strategy for child and adolescent health and wellbeing in WHO Europe region (2026-2030)*

# UNICEF: Health and Well-being in Schools

Creating Safe, Inclusive Learning Environments

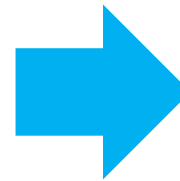
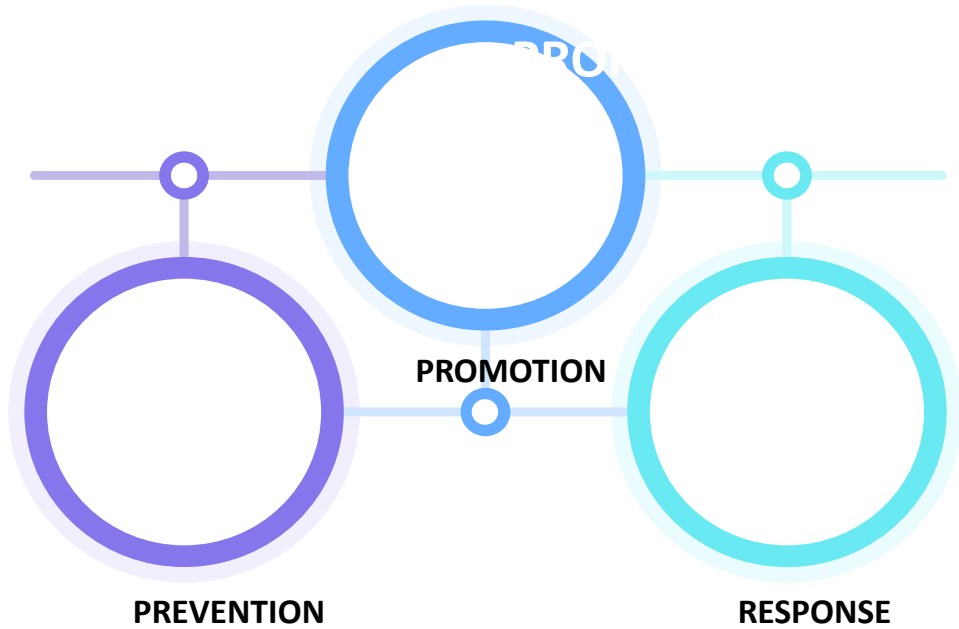
Providing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Supporting Policy and System Changes

Ensuring Access to Support Services

Raising Awareness and Reducing Stigma

# Our approach to well-being and mental health in education



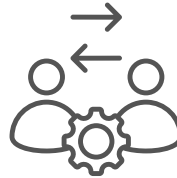
## Types of interventions



**Integrating SEL into curriculum and teaching practices**



**Supporting educators' well-being**



**Whole-school approach:** MHPSS literacy, school-based interventions, referral mechanisms and cross-sectoral collaboration

## POLAND

### Teacher professional development

Knowledge and skills of 9,500 educators improved, enhancing the mental health and well-being of 200,000 learners.

## BULGARIA

### Whole-school approach

to safe school environment and prevention of bullying and violence

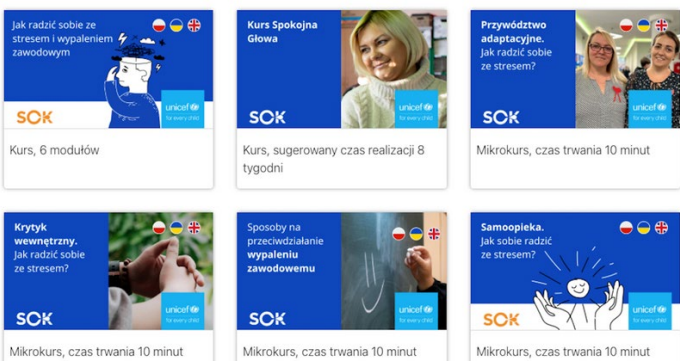
## ROMANIA

### TSI Safe School

Analysis of students needs & education system capacity; mapping of good practices in EU; Resources, tools and capacity building

unicef for every child

Edukatorzy – Zadbaj o swój dobrostan i uniknij wypalenia zawodowego



- Jak radzić sobie ze stresem i wypaleniem zawodowym**  
SOK  
Kurs, 6 modułów
- Kurs Spokojna Głowa**  
SOK  
Kurs, sugerowany czas realizacji 8 tygodni
- Przywództwo adaptacyjne. Jak radzić sobie ze stresem?**  
SOK  
Mikrokurs, czas trwania 10 minut
- Krytyk wewnętrzny. Jak radzić sobie ze stresem?**  
SOK  
Mikrokurs, czas trwania 10 minut
- Sposoby na przeciwdziałanie wypaleniu zawodowemu**  
SOK  
Mikrokurs, czas trwania 10 minut
- Samoopieka. Jak sobie radzić ze stresem?**  
SOK  
Mikrokurs, czas trwania 10 minut

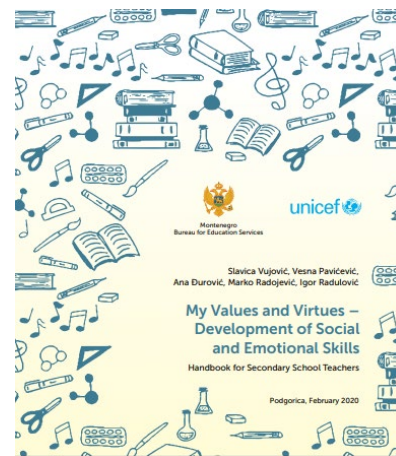


# UNICEF-supported initiatives in EUMS, accession countries

## MONTENEGRO

### Social and emotional learning the primary and secondary education curricula

Benefitting all learners in the country.

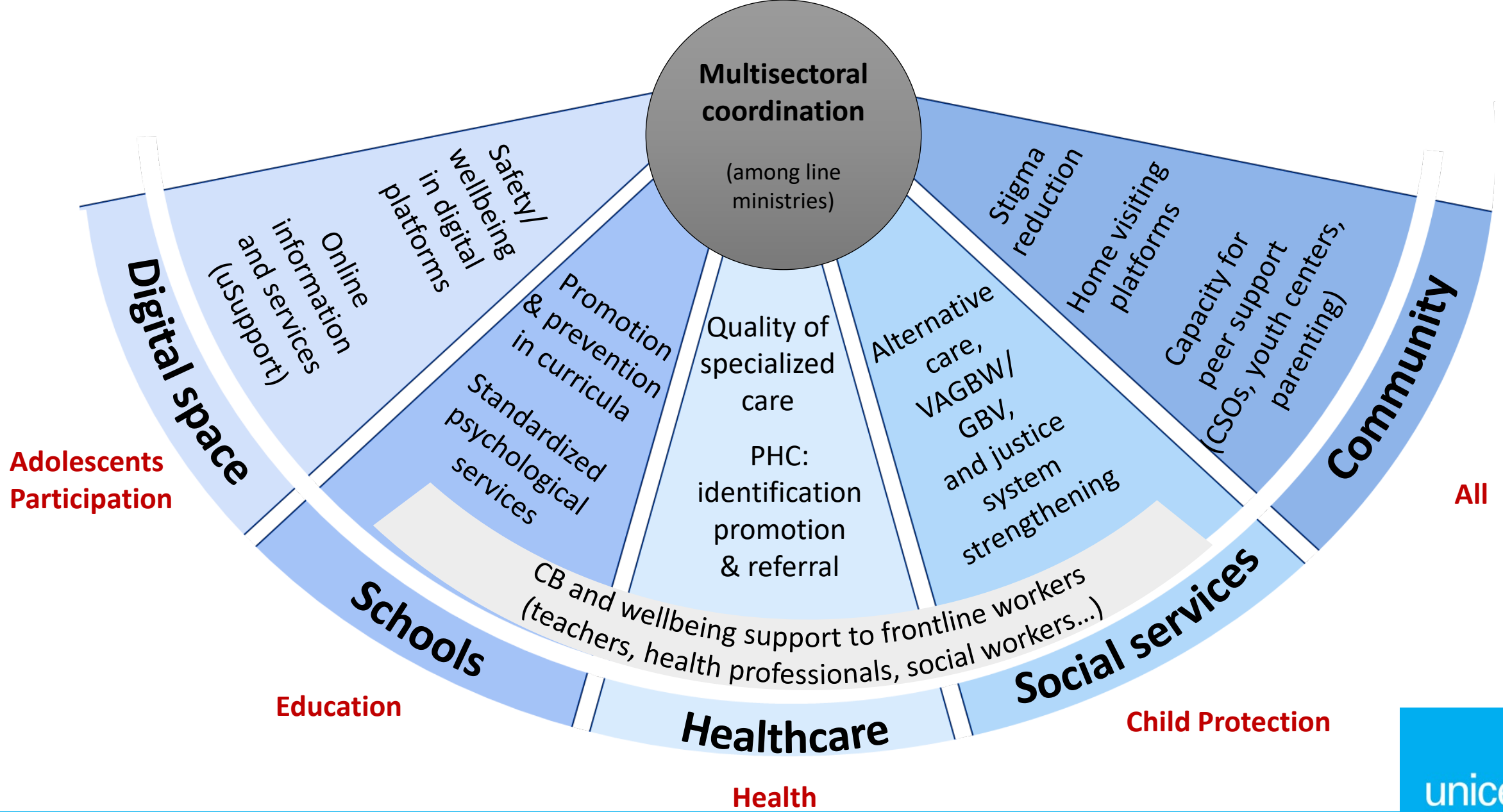


## CROATIA



### The "Schools of Support" programme: Strengthening mental health and emotional resilience

Programme for primary and secondary schools



# UNICEF Multi-sectoral approach

# UNICEF + WHO Collaboration

- **Child and Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Strategy (CAHWS)** Oct 2025
- **Joint Programme on MH and Psychosocial Well-being and Development** of Children and Adolescents. (2022-2025)
  - systemic change to promote nurturing environments and access to quality MH services, protection and care for young people
  - **Albania**, Bhutan, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, Jordan, Egypt, Malaysia, Maldives, Mozambique, **North Macedonia**, Papua New Guinea, and **Serbia**.
  - Strengthen leadership/governance; service delivery capacity; info systems, evidence and research, and promotion and prevention in MH
  - **8.8 million** service providers, children, adolescents and families have been **directly reached** through the Joint Programme across all activities
  - **330,000** children, adolescents, and/or caregivers have been reached and **are in contact with multi sectoral care services**, from 8 countries with available data

## Creating more health-promoting and supportive school environments

- The most effective way to improve health and enhance learning outcomes is to ensure **close cooperation between schools, teachers, families and communities.**
- **Multisectoral collaboration has been essential to support integrated services** and harness resources to the best possible effect, enabling a 'whole-of-systems' approach to mental health.
- **Fostering local partnerships** has helped to ensure that programmes and policies are relevant and culturally effective.
- **Regional collaboration and knowledge-sharing** has bridged gaps in capacity and supported the development and adaptation of programmes across diverse contexts.

# Thank you!

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# Planning for Healthy and Thriving Learners: A Sustainable Approach to Health Promoting Schools

Schools4Health Conference | 02 December 2025



# UNESCO's role in strengthening collaboration between the health and education sectors

## 5 core functions

Laboratory of ideas

Clearing house

Standard-setter

Catalyst and motor for international cooperation

Capacity-builder

## Examples of actions

Integration of HPS principles into the 2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development

Co-development of HPS Global Standards and Indicators with WHO (2021), providing a shared framework for both sectors

Assessment of national programmes against international standards and benchmarks (e.g . SERAT, AnImRS, RAMES)

Convening the Inter-Agency Group for School Health to facilitate inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration

Building capacities to implement HPS standards at country level

## Components of education for health and well-being

Education policy, laws and systems

Curriculum, teaching and learning

Health, safe and inclusive learning environment

Reporting, referral, care and support

Partnerships and community engagement

Data, evidence, learning and innovation



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# Embedding health and well-being into education sector planning



## Inter-Agency Group for School Health and Nutrition



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<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000396442>



# Briefing note: Why health & well-being in education matter

## School health and nutrition programmes deliver big education outcomes



**Up to 2.5 years** of additional schooling by providing school-based deworming and micronutrient supplementation where helminth infections and iron deficiency anaemia are prevalent (Bundy, 2011)



**21%–61% reduction** in absenteeism in low-income countries by promoting handwashing (McMichael, 2019)



**20% reduction** in moderate-to-severe anaemia in adolescent girls with daily meals fortified with micronutrients (Adelman et al., 2019)



**Reduced girls' absence** during menstruation, by improving school WASH (UNESCO, 2014)



**Up to 0.5 years** of additional learning when children with poor vision are provided with glasses (Glewwe, Park and Zhao, 2016)



**50% fewer** school days skipped by tackling school violence and bullying. Students who are frequently bullied are twice as likely to skip school than those who are not (OECD countries) (UNESCO, 2019a)



**62% reduction** in absenteeism by implementing malaria prevention interventions (Fernando, et al., 2006)



**Improved sexual and reproductive health** by providing comprehensive sexuality education, including reducing the risk of HIV and rates of early and unintended pregnancy – a critical factor in school dropout among girls (UNESCO, 2019b)

## Analyzing the status of health and well-being

- *Health and well-being issues*
- *Effect on education*
- *Available indicators and data sources*
- *Disaggregation by different groups of learners*

### Data Sources

CRVS, HMIS, EMIS, DHS, MICS, VACS, GSHS, HBSC, SSES, PISA, TIMSS, etc.

## Analyzing policy and provision

- *Policy environment*
- *SHN programmes*
- *Resources and implementation capacity*

### Tools

**POLICY:** Healthy SABER, ANESH...

**CURRICULUM & TRAINING:** SERAT, G-SHPPS, SFNE

**ENVIRONMENT:** JMP, GADRRRES, STL, NEAT-S

**SERVICES:** RAMES, HPS, WHO SHS, G-SHPPS



## Formulating Priorities and Key Strategies

- *Issue prioritization within SHN*
- *Tools and data to assess SHN among national education priorities*
- *Stakeholder mobilization and advocacy*

### Resources

- *Prioritisation principles & tools*
- *ToC*
- *Coherence, Accountability, Resources*
- *Participatory process*

# Planning for Healthy and Thriving Learners – a programme of work



**Planning for healthy and thriving learners**

A coordinated programme of work to embed health and well-being into education sector planning for transformative education

**From commitment to action**

*Planning for healthy and thriving learners* is a coordinated programme of work that translates high-level commitments into concrete action, placing learners' health and well-being at the centre of education systems. Supported by UNESCO's Strategy on Education for Health and Well-being and building on the joint work on Making Every School a Health-Promoting School, it provides practical tools, builds capacity, and empowers education authorities to take the driving seat in mobilising support and resources from other sectors, ensuring that learners' health and well-being are at the core of education sector planning.


Led by UNESCO, in collaboration with partners of the Inter-Agency Group for School Health and Nutrition (SHN), including the Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, the World Bank, Research Consortium for SHN, the UNESCO Chair for Global Health and Education, and others, the programme of work is responding to a clear global call for change.

**Why now?**

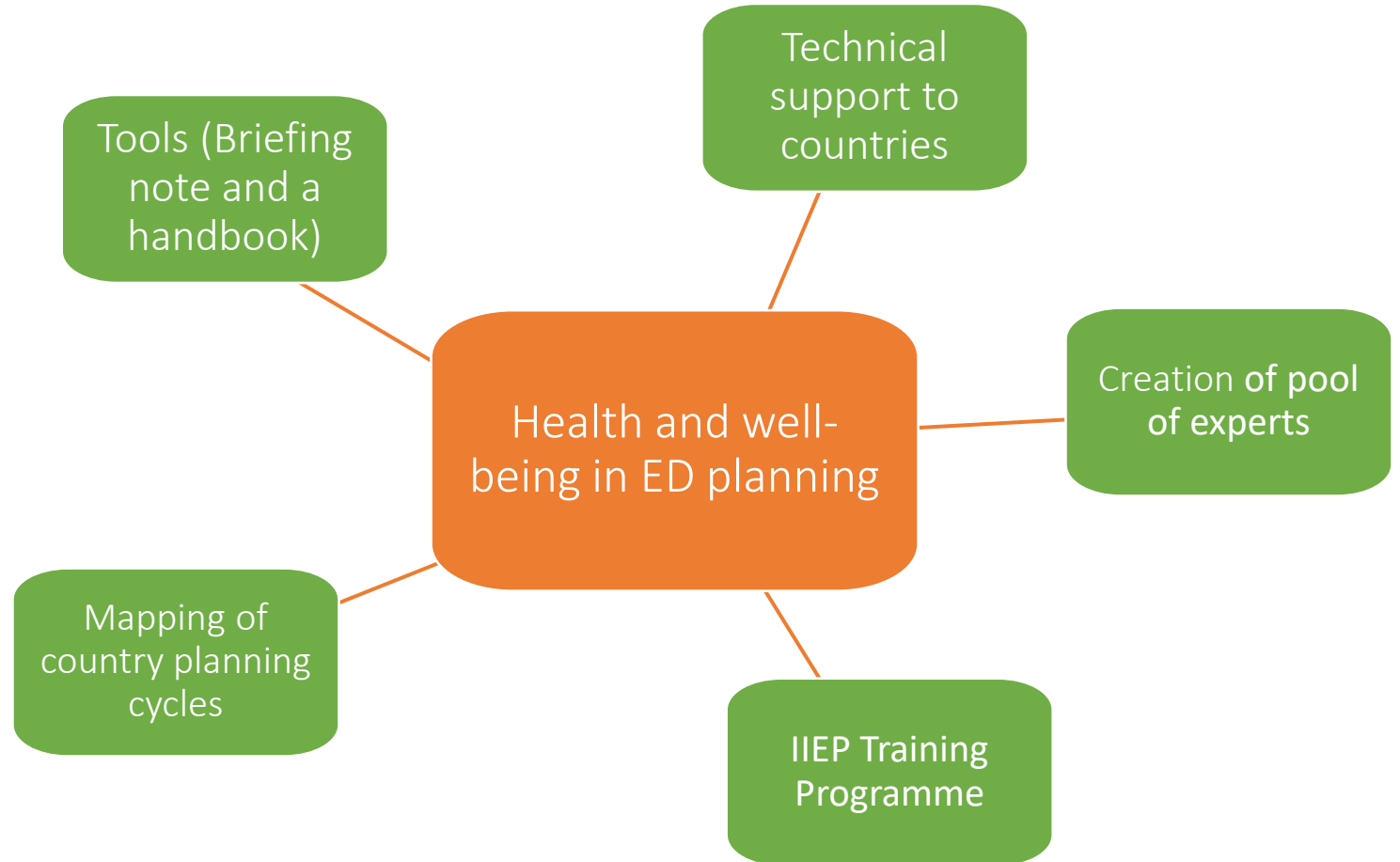
Nearly two thirds of the national statements of commitment made at the 2022 Transforming Education Summit emphasized the need to address the health, well-being and safety of learners and teachers. Yet considerable efforts are still required to translate these commitments into concrete, systematic, and sustained actions.

Recent health crises underscored the critical role of schools in ensuring educational continuity and supporting children's health in times of crisis, reinforcing the links between a safe, healthy learning environment and improved academic outcomes.

UNESCO, as the lead agency for the Education 2030 Agenda, together with its partners, is stepping up to support countries in addressing learning poverty and strengthening foundational learning. By bringing partners together, and providing expertise, tools and advocacy, UNESCO demonstrates that health and well-being are essential building blocks of transformative education, and promotes their systematic integration into education sector planning.



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